



ABORIGINAL CULTURAL INCLUSION FRAMEWORK¹

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 The Objective of the Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework

A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community.²

Aboriginal³ people are the most socially and economically marginalised group in Australia. They also experience greater barriers in accessing government and government funded services in comparison to the rest of the community.

The Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework (the Framework) is intended to assist SA government departments, agencies and organisations to develop services that are culturally inclusive and therefore more accessible to and appropriate for Aboriginal people.

1.2 Cultural Competency

The Framework uses the term cultural competence. There are various definitions of cultural competence but it encompasses:

- an awareness that cultural differences exist and appreciating and accepting those differences
- guarding against accepting your own behaviours, beliefs and actions as the norm
- responding respectfully to those of other cultures in a manner that recognises, affirms and values their worth and protects their dignity.

Attaining cultural competency is a process in which knowledge about individuals and their communities is translated and integrated into specific practices and policies applied in culturally appropriate settings. Culturally competent individuals establish positive helping relationships; engage families, cultural groups and/or their communities; and strive to improve the quality of the services they provide.

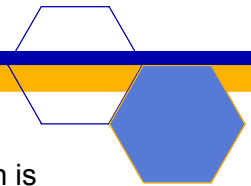
Cultural competence also means recognising that Aboriginal communities are not all one cultural group and not all the same, that similarities and differences exist within

¹ The information for this document and its attachments is sourced from documents developed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet December 2006:

- *A Cultural Inclusion Framework for South Australia Document One - Guide to Framework;*
- *A Cultural Inclusion Framework for South Australia Companion Document Two - Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Instrument*
- *A Cultural Inclusion Framework for South Australia Companion Document Three - Cultural Inclusion Checklist.*

² Cappo 2002, *Quoted in Vic Health Research Summary 2 - Social inclusion* as a determinant of mental health and wellbeing (January 2005) from Department of Planning and Community Development 2010 *Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework*

³ When the term Aboriginal is used in this document it should be read as an inclusive term of Torres Strait Islander people's culture and language.



and across each community. It also means not assuming that one Aboriginal person is the knowledge holder and the sole voice for the whole community in which they live.

1.3 Using the Cultural Inclusion Framework

The Framework provides a tool for departments, agencies and organisations to review and reform current practices in relation to how they do business with, and deliver services to Aboriginal people, families and communities.

There are four areas of focus for government departments, agencies and organisations under the Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework.

1.3.1 Leadership and Governance

The leadership group provides overall guidance to the organisation. It establishes structures and processes, is responsible for the behaviour, culture and values in the organisation and is accountable for the achievement of organisation’s mission, operations and goals for diverse Aboriginal communities. In this area governance refers to appropriate representation of and consultation with Aboriginal people.

1.3.2 Policies, Programs and Service Delivery -

This area focuses on the extent to which an organisation’s programs and services are designed and operated in culturally inclusive and competent ways so that barriers to access by Aboriginal clients are reduced or eliminated.

1.3.3 Workforce

This area refers to an organisation’s activities to build and develop its Aboriginal workforce and to ensure that its broader workforce has the capability and practices to deliver culturally sensitive, respectful and inclusive services to clients.

1.3.4 Working with other Agencies/Organisations

This area is concerned with how well the interface with other agencies and organisations is managed to ensure a coordinated and inclusive response to service delivery.

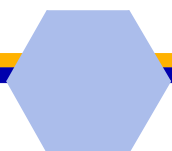
2. UNDERTAKING AN ABORIGINAL CULTURAL INCLUSION ASSESSMENT

There is no single approach to assessing and reviewing the cultural competence of an organisation and its staff. However conducting a self assessment is a good first step in the development of a long term and integrated cultural competency plan.

The *Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Self Assessment Instrument* (attachment one) will assist organisations to undertake an assessment of their cultural competence - to identify strengths and areas for improvement in their responses to the needs of Aboriginal individuals, families and communities. The outcome of the assessment should assist organisations to develop a cultural inclusion action plan.

The table following provides a number of suggested steps in a self- assessment process. The sections referred in step five are from the *Aboriginal Cultural Competency Self Assessment Instrument*.

Task		Person(s) Responsible	Suggested Procedure(s)
1	Obtain support for a cultural competence	CE or CE and leadership group	Present at board meeting (i.e. purpose, importance and long term goals)



Task		Person(s) Responsible	Suggested Procedure(s)
	assessment		
2	Designate a cultural competence assessment coordinator	Board members, senior leadership, administrative staff, service delivery staff (ensure Aboriginal input)	Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • request volunteers • appoint individuals willing to assume role • select from individuals named
3	Select and organise a cultural competence assessment committee	Coordinator ⁴	Form committee ⁵ , using one representative from the board, administrative staff, supervisory/management staff, support staff and where possible the individuals and families served. Ensure there is a fair Aboriginal representation on the Assessment Committee. For agencies that do not have a high level of Aboriginal representation in its staffing to include representatives of other organisations, local community or advisory boards or groups.
4	Determine procedure for self-assessment.	Committee	Review the organisation's mission statement, policy statements, policy procedure manual, personnel manual and website. Determine the degree to which each demonstrates a commitment to cultural competence and diversity.
5	Conduct self-assessment	Committee	Make decisions regarding who/which groups will complete the self assessment instrument, establish time frame and follow up.
6	Analyse findings	Committee	Consolidate responses to self assessment instrument and prepare a master copy for report. Complete a narrative summary considering : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what the assessment indicated about your organisation's overall response to the Aboriginal people, families and communities served ○ what did the assessment indicate about the way your organisation manages organisational issues related to cultural competency

⁴ Important note: although the coordinator may act on behalf of the CE or senior management, the CE and management should remain active and supportive of the process.

⁵ Important note: the Committee should become a standing body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan for achieving cultural competence. It should include other board or staff members as appropriate and develop a process for reporting its progress to the organisation.

Task		Person(s) Responsible	Suggested Procedure(s)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what specific strengths did your organisation identify in completing the assessment ○ what specific work needs to be undertaken to strengthen cultural competency within your group?
7	Report findings	CE and Committee	<p>Provide a full report to the CE with all supporting documentation.</p> <p>Present a report to the board and staff including a summary of responses, comments and suggestions, the document's checklist, the committee's response to "Interpreting assessment results", and future plans.</p> <p>Develop a plan for future action to address identified challenges.</p>

3. DEVELOPING AN ABORIGINAL CULTURAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN.

The assessment should indicate the way your organisation manages issues related to cultural competency including:

- the specific strengths your organisation identified
- the specific work that needs to be undertaken to strengthen cultural competency within your organisation.

The results of the assessment should enable organisations to develop action steps for specific management, staff and service delivery improvements as it integrates and advances cultural competence principles.

The plan should address:

- how your organisation will build on identified cultural strengths
- how your organisation will address the identified cultural challenges
- how the actions identified will be undertaken and progress monitored.

Attachment two provides a list of some of the actions your organisation may consider including in your action plan and the performance indicators for the key areas you may want to measure and monitor. Note that these lists are not exhaustive and your organisation may want to consider other or additional actions and other or additional performance indicators.